

# Standing the Test of Time

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Old photographs bringing back smiles and memories for Senior Minister of State for Education and Information, Communications and the Arts, RAdm (NS) Lui Tuck Yew seen here chatting with visitors.

Memories, sights and sounds, which had once accompanied us on our life journey, had been unknowingly forgotten as we go through new experiences and phases in our lives. But these lost memories come flooding back as we flip through our photo albums with nostalgia, recalling the times when we took the photographs with our family and friends at different places.

The National Library has always put in concerted efforts to preserve our local print heritage and not let them become Singapore's lost memories. Memories of our family and friends form an important facet of our national memory, serving as a source of pride and a point of reference to Singapore's social achievements over the decades.

The Heritage Road Show, which is into its third run, took place on 2 August 2008 and it was a vibrant showcase of local lives as seen through the kaleidoscope of Singaporeans. Visitors were able to view still shots of kampung life back then in Upper Serangoon, old documents like library cards, certificates and artefacts such as game pieces from yesteryears through an exhibition organised by Aljunied Town Council, one of the working partners for this Road Show.

Besides taking a journey back in time, there was a photography exhibition on the '43 Things that Remind Me of Singapore'. Winning entries were picked from the photography competition held earlier this year, which invited

Singaporeans to submit photographs of Singapore's sights and sounds. Today's memories will be tomorrow's history and this was the message that the National Library wanted to bring across to the local community through this competition.

Senior Minister of State for Education and Information, Communications and the Arts, Rear Admiral (NS) Lui Tuck Yew, graced the event as guest-of-honour. He summed up the importance of preserving our heritage in view of modernisation succinctly, saying, "With more people travelling widely and having Internet access, many begin to see themselves as cosmopolitans or citizens of the world. While we adopt a global view, we must develop a sense of history and appreciation of our heritage. Only then can we truly understand how and why we are unique, relate to the world confidently and develop the roots that bind us to this nation."

The National Library also launched two online initiatives, namely the Virtual Donors Gallery and Flickr SNAP. The Virtual Donors Gallery ([www.donors.nl.sg](http://www.donors.nl.sg)) is an online portal showcasing highlights of Donors Collection and local artefacts donated by the public during the first Heritage Road Show in 2006. Researchers and overseas visitors can now get a chance to see our local heritage in the comfort of their homes.

The other initiative, Flickr SNAP ([www.flickr.com/people/snaps/](http://www.flickr.com/people/snaps/)), is an extension of the National Library's Singapore National Album of Pictures (SNAP) on the popular photo-sharing website, Flickr.com. This initiative allows the National Library to widen its donorship pool by encouraging the online community to share their personal photo collections without having to part with their much-treasured mementos. In support of this initiative, Yahoo! had also featured heritage photos on Singapore's Yahoo! network and participated in the Road Show to promote greater awareness of their services.

Through public contributions, the National Library hopes to build a more comprehensive collection of pictorial records of Singapore's progression before the 1980s. Scores of Singaporeans came ready with photos depicting local architecture and landscape, commerce and industry, arts, ethnic communities, events, geography, nature, organisations, personalities, recreation, politics and government.

Dr N Varaprasad, Chief Executive of National Library Board, lauded the responsive role that the public had taken up in the ongoing efforts to expand and enrich Singapore's heritage collection. He added, "The photos that you donate will form part of Singapore's pictorial heritage for future generations. Donations to the National Library play a significant role in adding diversity and depth to our collections. Participation from the local communities is thus important to preserving and building our cultural heritage."

At the end of the event, the National Library had harvested a total of 1,095 items of which 150 were physical items

and 945 photographs were converted into digital format. The physical items collected included Arts Theatre of Singapore programme collaterals from the 1950s to 1960s, photographs of Bugis Street during the 1960s and the Singapore Island Country Club during the 1930s. All these will go towards building our print heritage for current and future generations to appreciate the history of Singapore.

Do log on to [http://www.flickr.com/groups/snaps\\_events/pool/show/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/snaps_events/pool/show/) to view digitised photographs of National Day Parade photographs taken in 1963, just before Singapore's independence and also the nation's second National Day Parade. These photos are not easily attainable and the National Library is excited to have these in the heritage collection.

If you missed the Heritage Road Show, you can still do a physical or digital donation via [www.deposit.nl.sg](http://www.deposit.nl.sg). Your donations will help our future generations to revel in the roots of their history and also appreciate the identity that is unique to Singaporeans.



**What are the things that remind you of Singapore? Singaporeans tell their stories through a photo showcase depicting the sights and sounds of Singapore.**